

A

SERMON

At the ELECTION

O F

Lord Mayor,

1711.

Heathcote, Mayor.

*Cur. Special. tent. in Festo
S. Mich. Arch. ss. Die
Sabbati xxix^o die Sep-
tembr. 1711. Annoq;
RR^{na}, Annæ, Magnæ
Britanniæ, &c. De-
cimo.*

IT is Ordered, That the
Thanks of this Court be
given to the Reverend
Dr. Kennett, Dean of *Peterbo-
rough*, for his Sermon this
Day Preach'd at the Parish-
Church of St. *Lawrence Jew-
ry*, before the Lord Mayor,
Aldermen, and Citizens of
this City; And that he be
desired to Print the same.

GIBSON.

X
The Christian Neighbour.

A

SERMON

PREACH'D in the Church of
St. Lawrence-Jewry,

Before the RIGHT HONOURABLE the

LORD MAYOR,

The Aldermen, Sheriffs, and
Commonalty of the City of

L O N D O N,

Upon the Election of a MAYOR
for the Year ensuing, on the Feast
of *St. Michael*, MDCCXI.

By *WHITE KENNETT*. D. D. Dean of
Peterborough, and Chaplain in Ordinary to
Her MAJESTY.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. CHURCHILL, at the *Black-Swan* in *Pater-Noster-Row*. 1711.

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To the Right Honourable
Sir Gilbert Heathcote, K^t,
LORD-MAYOR
OF THE
City of LONDON ;

AND
To the Right Worshipful
Sir Robert Beechcroft, K^t,
MAYOR Elect for the Year
Ensuing.

This Plain Discourse is humbly
Presented, with fervent Prayers
for the Peace and Prosperity of
this **GREAT CITY**, in the
Wise and Happy Administration
of the Government of it.

2

W

To the Right Honourable
Sir George Savile Bart.
LORD AVEON
OF THE
CHANCELLERY
OF THE EXCHEQUER
OF THE KING
OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND OF IRELAND
IN PARLIAMENT MET
AND ASSEMBLED
IN THE CITY OF
LONDON
THE 15th DAY OF
JANUARY 1701
IN THE 1st YEAR OF
THE REIGN OF
HIS MOST EXCELLENT
Majesty KING
GEORGE I.
OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND OF IRELAND
BY APPOINTMENT
OF HIS MOST EXCELLENT
Majesty
OF THE CHANCELLERY
OF THE EXCHEQUER
OF THE KING
OF GREAT BRITAIN
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ST. LUKE x. 29.

But he willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my Neighbour ?

AMIDST the Glory of our Arms abroad, Peace Friendship and good Neighbourhood at Home, are the familiar Wishes, are I hope the hearty Prayers and Endeavours, of all sincere Christians, and especially of all Us here present. We are born to what our own Language happily calls Good Nature : We are here bred to what the World calls Civility : Above all, we are baptized into a Religion of Unity, Charity and Brotherly Love and Kindness.

Our great Master came down the very *Wisdom from above*, Pure and Peaceable. He came to regulate and refine the Affections of Mankind, to take away the hard and the narrow Heart, the selfish and the worldly Mind ; to open the Breast, and enlarge and extend the Soul of Christians to every Object of Compassion, within their Reach

or

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or View, or Apprehension. This excellent Design of universal Love and Goodness gave an occasion to these Words at the 25th ver. *Behold a certain Lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal Life?* Not that he was serious in the care of his Soul, or so much valued any means of Salvation for it. No, his present Business was to tempt, or make trial of our Master's Wisdom, by putting, as he thought, a shrewd Question, that might insnare him, or expose him in the Answer of it. But this little Artifice of Wit and Malice fell before the Oracle of God. He said unto him, v. 26. *What is written in the Law? How readest thou?* i. e. I refer you to your own Books, to your received Rule of Faith and Manners; What say your Law and Prophets? The Jew could not refuse to stand by this Authority, and he well knew, that all the Precepts of Religion there deliver'd, were in effect comprised in the Love of God, and the Love of his Neighbour: Wherefore he answered directly enough, v. 27. *Thou shalt love thy Lord thy God — and thy Neighbour as thyself.*

Happy for him, if his Heart had gone along with his Lips: The professing this was right, if his Practice had been agreeable. Our Blessed Lord would only ad-
monish

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monish him to make good his own Declaration, to do as he had said, v. 28. *Thou hast answered right, this do, and thou shalt live.* This Reply might have satisfied a Man of Conscience and any Modesty with it. But the *Jewish* Lawyer had a farther Design, and therefore still another Question. He was conscious, that he might be now condemned out of his own Mouth, and be found guilty of the Breach of those great Duties, which he himself had confess'd to be the whole Substance of Religion. *Here* then he was to bring himself off, and so to contrive, that his own Words might not arise up in Judgment against him. As to the first Duty, the *Love of God*, he was secure; none could charge him with Profaneness; and as for Hypocrisy, that could be known only unto God and his own Conscience; so he takes no notice at all of the Love of God, but was to clear himself only in the other Matter, the *Love of his Neighbour*.

He had a profess'd Aversion to Foreigners and Strangers, he hated them as Aliens and Mortal Enemies: They were all Publicans and abominable Sinners to him. He admitted none for his *Neighbours*, but his Fellow *Israelites*, his Circumcised Brethren. Nay, and among them of his own Nation, he loved only those of his peculiar Tribe; or rather he kept all his special favours for

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his own Sect and Party, being a *Scribe* and a *Pbarisee*. He could hardly pretend himself to be a good Neighbour; however he would vindicate what he thought his Honour; or at least he would perplex the Cause which he could not defend; *He willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my Neighbour?*

Before we come to the full sense of these Words, there be two Things, as it were in the very found of 'em, useful to observe, *i. e.* How forward People are to justify themselves: And how ready to evade a fair Answer, by starting of a new Question.

I. *First*, How forward People are to justify themselves: Tho' their Cause be wrong, and their own Thoughts are conscious of it, yet it is a Pride of Heart not to take any blame, therefore not to confess any Fault, but to deceive, or at least to amuse the World upon it. Especially, charge them with any breach of Charity, they have some Excuse at hand, they have some Defence to make, some little Apology however. *This* the Infirmity of Humane Nature for every Offender to do like him in the Text, *to be willing to justify himself*. When alas the ingenuous Confession of a Fault purges more than any feign'd Excuse, or waving Denial of it. Fair Acknowledgment and Promise of

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of Amendment are better in the Eye of Man, and especially in the sight of God, before whom without Confession and Repentance, *No Man living can be justified.*

II. *Secondly*, How ready People are to evade a fair Answer, by starting of a new Question. The *Lawyer* here should have answer'd, That this Love of his Neighbour was a Duty, and he would practise it; but he fenc'd and put it by, in asking, *Who is my Neighbour?*

A common Art of Evasion, to put off a direct Answer by raising another Question. So *Pilate* the partial Judge, when the Holy *Jesus* had told him, that for this Cause he came into the World, that he should bear witness unto the Truth; and that every one who was of the Truth would hear his Voice. *Pilate* instead of acquiescing in these Words, had a captious Interrogatory upon him, *What is Truth?* Not to gain Satisfaction, but to wave the Discourse, or to get the last Word in it; for when *Pilate* had said this, he went out, and thought no more of Truth.

The like way of Questioning does still arise in the Hearts of many Christians. When they are charg'd with the great Rules of Christianity to be friendly and Neighbourly, and to love as Brethren; they deny not the Duty, yet would evade the Practice, and

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willing to justifie themselves, cry, Who is my Brother, or my Neighbour?

This Man is of another Country, *that* of another Religion; here I have no Acquaintance, there no Obligation; I know him only as a Stranger, I suspect him rather as my Enemy. He dwells near me, but oppos'd me; or what grates me more, he continually slights me. True, I must love my Neighbour as my self, but I must first know *who is my Neighbour?* When the true meaning is, what the furious *Jehu* said, *Who is on my side, who?*

Now therefore to lay the right Foundation of good Neighbourhood, and to shew the large and noble Spirit, of Christianity, I would represent from the Words of the Text

I. What a narrow and wrong Sense the *Jews* put upon this Relation of *Neighbours*.

II. In what more extensive Sense our Blessed Saviour would have the Word *Neighbour* to be taken.

And yet *Lastly*, what particular Relations there be, that make others to be our more especial *Neighbours*, and entitle them to our more peculiar Care and Love.

I. Let me first represent unto you what a narrow and wrong Sense the *Jews* put upon this Relation of *Neighbours*.

They

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They knew themselves to be God's peculiar People, and the chosen Lot of his Inheritance. Hence they were fond to imagine, that as God had cast off the rest of the World, and seem'd to confine his Love and Providence to their Church and Nation; so they likewise might despise and reject all that Refuse of Mankind, and look upon none but within their own Borders, and among their own Tribes.

And then having been commanded to root out the Heathen, and to destroy that People round about 'em; and of those few who remained in their Land, to contract no Alliance, nay to have no Converse with them; for fear only they should learn their Idolatry, and partake in their accursed Sins. This farther increased their Aversion to Strangers, and made them more forward to avoid 'em, and even to abhor 'em.

Not that they had really any Grounds of such Partiality and Prejudice in their written Law. No! Their Law was given by the God of Mercies and loving Kindnesses, and had nothing in it to justify the Hatred of any of his Creatures. Their Law, *Deut. 10. 16.* taught 'em just the contrary, That God was *kind and bountiful, without Respect of Persons*, and that Strangers were to be receiv'd and reliev'd by them, *Love ye therefore the Stranger, for ye were Strangers*

ers

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ers in the Land of Egypt, vers. 19. So as it was not the Word of God, but their own Tradition : Not the Spirit of their Religion, but their own ill Nature, that incircled their Charity within themselves, and made them turn away from all that were of another Nation, or but of another Opinion.

They called the Poor *Heathens*, by no better a Name than *Dogs*, and treated them with no more regard. To this odious Spite of theirs Our Blessed Saviour does allude in his Answer to the Woman of Canaan, St Matt. xv. 26. *It is not meet to take the Childrens Bread, and to cast it to Dogs*, which seem'd a Proverbial Saying among the *Jews*, to restrain and deride the doing any good Office for a *Gentile*. This, said they, is Charity mistaken ; is in effect to take the Bread out of the Mouths of the Sons and Daughters of God, and to cast it unto *Dogs*, those Strangers, those vile and contemptible Creatures. The wiser *Heathens* saw this narrowness of Soul in 'em with great Indignation, and upbraided 'em with such a sorry Temper, as *Non monstrare viam eadem nisi Sacra colenti*, Not to set a Stranger in the right way, nor do a common Office of Humanity to any but a circumcised Brother.

Nay, not the *Heathens* only, but the *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks* were there utmost

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Aversion. The Samaritans a part of their Ten Tribes professing the Law of *Moses*, yet settling in another way of Worship, they would not endure 'em, *St. Job. iv. 9.* *The Jews have no Dealings with the Samaritans* ; No! they call'd them very Devils, *St. Job. viii. 48.* Said the *Jews* insulting our Saviour, *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a Devil?*

Nay in their own *Jerusalem*, it was hard for them to find out a *Neighbour* ; the *Pharisee* and *Sadducee* could not bear with one another ; the Zealots especially devoutly hated all but themselves : These fatal Fends and Divisions among 'em threatned and hastned the Destruction of their City and Temple.

II. Let me, *Secondly* shew in what more extensive Sense our Blessed Saviour would have the Word *Neighbour* to be taken.

Our Blessed Lord who understood all thoughts, and knew what was in Man, perceived the *Jewish Rabbi* had this evil leaning in his Heart : You remind me of my Duty to my *Neighbour*, when I am enough sensible of it. There is no Native *Judea*, at least no Inhabitant of *Jerusalem*, however no true *Israelite* of sound doctrine and the right way of Worship, but whom I love and would defend. But what,
do

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do you mean the Idolater or Infidel, or Men of the Samaritan Separation, or our own *False Brethren*? I would therefore know in your Sense, *Who is my Neighbour*?

I say, our Saviour knew this to be the intention of the narrow-minded *Jew*, and so offer'd a familiar Instance to instruct him better, *vers. 30. A certain Man going down from Jerusalem falling among Thieves, stripes and wounded, and left half dead*: Yet when a *Priest* and a *Levite* came that way and saw him, they *passed by on the other side*, without any Pity or Compassion on him. Where our Saviour directly pointed at the Respect of Persons, and Distinction of Parties kept up by the *Jewish* Priesthood, who would leave a Man to perish, if they thought him a Stranger, or out of their beloved *Peculium*. But says our Lord, a certain *Samaritan* as he *sojourned* saw him, and had Compassion on him, binding up his Wounds, pouring in Oyl and Wine, and laying in Provision for him. This good *Samaritan* never ask'd what his Country or what his Persuasion was; but seeing him a great Object of Charity, he stepped in to relieve him as a Fellow Creature. Our Lord made him confess, that the *Neighbour* here was He who *shewed Mercy*, i. e. the *Samaritan* and bid him *go and do likewise*, i. e. to drop all Distinctions in the common Offices of Justice

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Justice and Charity, not to make his own temporal Decrees, so as to elect the *Jew* to favour, and to reprobate as it were the Heathen Aliens and his *Samaritan Brethren*; but to take opportunities of doing good to any mortal Man, with an universal Charity and Love.

For such was the infinite or unbounded Goodness of God; He made his *Sun to shine upon the Just and the Unjust*; He was *kind to the Unthankful and the Wicked*; His *Mercy was over all his Works*. So would He their Messiah be the Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind, and give himself a Ransom for *All*. And so should his Doctrine and that of his Disciples be, to *follow Peace with all Men, to do Good unto all Men, to be Patient and Gentle toward all Men*; to receive Strangers, and even to love Enemies, with such Blessing and Praying for 'em, as might the sooner reconcile 'em. Thus did the holy Jesus enlarge the Sense of *Neighbour*, cramped and confin'd by the envious and mean-spirited *Jews*: The Christian's *Neighbour* is the remotest Man in the World, to whom he can possibly do any Good.

III. Not but that *Thirdly* and *Lastly*, There be some particular Relations that make others to be our more especial *Neighbours*,

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hours, and do entitle them to our more peculiar Care and Love.

For tho' Jew and Infidel, Acquaintance and Stranger, Friend and Foe, have All a Claim to the common Offices of Humanity, nay, of Christian Beneficence, and are by no means excluded (not a single Soul of 'em excluded) from our Obligations to promote their Welfare, and above all their Eternal Salvation : Yet however, there may be some particular Circumstances and Conditions of Life, that ought more nearly to unite our common Interests, and our mutual Affections.

To mention 1. The same Profession of Faith. 2. The same Native Country. And 3. the same nearer Place of Habitation, this City.

1. The same Profession of Faith should endear us to one another. For Religion has the Nature and the very Name of being a faster Tie and Band of Charity. Our Gospel-Religion has more in it of that Vertue than any other of what Denomination soever. *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*, might oblige and constrain us to keep the Unity of the Spirit in a Band of stricter Peace and Love. Fellow-Christians and Brethren in the Lord make up a Family, and even a Catholick Body, where all the Members, under Christ the Head, should care one for another. And the Alliance is still

greater

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greater between those who can agree in the same Principles, and especially those who join in the same Communion. This singular Love and Kindness is allow'd, nay, is prescrib'd by the good Apostle, *Gal. vi. 10.* As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all Men, and especially unto them who are of *the Household of Faith.*

As we are reformed from the intolerable Corruptions, and freed from the Yoke of Popery ; We are a Protestant People, a Redeemed Nation ; and as such, should know our common Enemy, and unanimously consult our common Interest and Safety ; we should join All, as with the Heart of one Man, in our Self-Defence and Preservation ; the *Papists*, I dare say, will make no distinction among us, if, what God forbid, they become Lords over us.

Again, as we are an establish'd Church, the Purest and the Happiest Part of the Reformation ; we should be joined together in the same Mind and Affections, as well as in the same Articles of Faith, and like Rules of Discipline and Worship. To create Distinctions without real Difference, has been always a very false and foolish Thing, and what is worse, may be a very fatal Thing. As for those who unhappily separate from us, let us convince them, that there is no necessity, no justifying Reason for it. Let us labour with Truth and Charity, to persuade and

and convince them, how much they owe to Unity and Peace. Nothing would tend more to harden them than Wrath and Persecution: Nothing will so effectually bring 'em over, as a Spirit of Meekness, with good Life and Conversation. Still the common Enemy is the Church of Rome, whose Principle has been to keep no *Faith* with Heretics; and whose Custom is and must be, to give no *Indulgence* to them.

2. But *Secondly*, The same Native Country is another Cement of Christian Charity.

It must be some Instinct of Nature, because the Consent of all Mankind to love their own Nation, to value their Birthright and the Inheritance of their Fathers. When *Moses* spied an *Egyptian* smiting an *Hebrew* one of his Brethren, i. e. his own Countrymen; in his Tenderneſs he delivered the one and out of too great Indignation he slew the other. And when he went a second time and saw two Men of the *Hebrews* striving together, he said to him who began the Assault, *Wherefore smitest thou thy Fellow?* i. e. thy Brother *Israelite*? This may provoke God to make you longer Slaves in a strange Land. Our Blessed Saviour seems to have had a particular Regard to the good Esteem of his own Nation, while he declared, that he was not sent, save to the lost Sheep of the House of *Israel*; while he wept over *Jerusalem*, and often visited *Nazareth* and *Bethlehem*; tho' one would think, nothing could

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draw him thither but an impulse of Natural Affection ; for he himself was sensible that *Prophet had least Honour in his own Country.* St. Paul was another great Example of un-bred Love and Zeal for his Native Land, the goodly Heritage of his Ancestors. He was by Birth a true old *Hebrew* of the *Hebrews*, i. e. for many Generations. He had indeed but little Reason to be fond of that Birthright ; for he was brought into great Perils by his own Countrymen, and he had least to do with them, for his Mission was to be an *Apostle of the Gentiles* ; yet Nature must break through all Discouragements ; wherefore, *Act. xxviii. 19* tho' plagued and oppressed by his Fellow *Jews*, he had still a loving Eye upon his dear Country, *I was constrained* (says he) *to appeal unto Caesar*, not that I had ought to *accuse my Nation of* ; and how much less would he have betray'd his Nation ? Nay, what a Rapture of Zeal had he, *Rom. ix. 3.* *I could wish myself accursed or separated from Christ for my Brethren, my Kins-men according to the Flesh, who are Israelites.*

Let us conceive it impossible, that any Natural Born Subjects should so far degenerate, as to be without this Natural Affection. Let us take it for impossible in them to have any inclination to exalt a common Enemy and Oppressor. No such Monsters can infect our Land, unless a foreign Religion

gion has quite alienated their Affections. The *Jews* valued Men according to the Love of their Nation; St. Luke vii. 5. *For he loveth our Nation, and hath built us a Synagogue*. And they esteemed every Magistrate or chief Commander according to the many worthy Deeds done by him for the Nation. Acts xxiv. 2. So far Good and Grateful Men.

But, *Thirdly* and *Lastly*, We should often and especially at this time, consider the same nearer Place of Habitation, this City, a stricter Obligation on us to be good Christian Neighbours.

It may be thought trifling to observe, that a Neighbour is Originally the nigh Dweller, and the Word is now almost swallowed up in that one Signification, tho' it extends, as I have told you, in the Christian Language to all Corners of the Earth, and to every one who has any or no Dwelling Place. But however, the nearness of dwelling together, the being as it were cast into one Fold, nay moving as it were in one Sphere, this should draw Men's Hearts and Minds the more into Unity and Confederate Love.

Divine Providence Ordained, that Rational Creatures should be sociable. Even while the World was a Wilderness, Men pitched their Tents together, and moved in Bands and Companies from Place to Place; till Humanity improving, Towns and Cities were laid out for a far more convenient Residence.

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vidence. The Immunities and Privileges of every City were highly valued by those who could purchase 'em, and more highly by those who were born to them, *Acts xxii. 28.* said the chief Captain, *with a great Sum obtain'd I this Freedom.* The Apostle answered, *But I was Free-born,* and thought it modest to glory in this, *That he was a Citizen of no mean City.* He represented the Members of the Christian Church under such an Honourable Figure of Community and Liberty, *Ephes. ii. 19.* *Now therefore ye are no more Foreigners and Strangers, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints and of the Household, or incorporated Family of God,* And again he express'd all our Christian Conversation by a *Citizenship*, and holding Conversation or Commerce in the *Jerusalem* above, the Mother of us all, and of all other Cities.

May the Rights and Privileges of this City be never more violated by Arbitrary Power or by Popular Confusions! May She for many many Years be under the Protection of her Rightful and Lawful Sovereign the QUEEN, and remain always under that of her Protestant Successors! O may She once more be a City at Unity within her self! Peace within her Walls, and Plentifulness within her Palaces! No Decay, no Complaining in her Streets! No return of the Destroying sword, the consuming Fire, or alas the raging

raging Pestilence ! Let Peace and Health and
 Safety be her continual Blessings ! May she
 never want a Man worthy to be chosen to
 succeed another worthy Magistrate ! In a
 Word, may the Prophecies of one Chapter
 be fulfill'd in her before this Generation pass
 away, *Isaiah ix.* " Let the Glory of the
 " Lord rise upon her ! Let the *Gentiles* come
 " unto her Light ; Let the abundance of the
 " Sea be converted unto her ! Let the Isles
 " wait for her, and the Ships of *Tarshish*, to
 " bring her Sons from far, and their Silver
 " and Gold with them ! Let her Gates be
 " open continually ! Let the Place of her
 " Sanctuary be beautified, and the Places
 " the Worshippers Feet be made Glorious
 " Let her be called the City of the Lord
 " the Sion of the Holy One ! An Eternal
 " Excellence, and a Joy of many Genera-
 " tions ! Let Violence be no more heard
 " her Land, nor Wasting or Destruction
 " within her Borders : Let her Wall be
 " called *Salvation*, and her Gates *Praise*
 " Let the Lord be her Light, and God be
 " Glory : Even the Lord be her everlasting
 " Light ; and the Days of her Mourning
 " be ended : And her People also be
 " Righteous ! The Lord hasten it in his
 " Time ! To God the Father, Son, and Holy
 Ghost, &c.


 FINIS.